

Message Text

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ORIGIN PM-09

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NEA-10 GAC-01 TRSE-00 MBFR-03 SAJ-01 IO-12 OIC-04

AEC-11 ACDA-19 OMB-01 /154 R

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APPROVED BY PM: MR. SPIERS

D/ MBFR: MR. BAKER

EUR/ RPM: MR. STREATOR

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

USMISSION NATO

INFO ALL NATO CAPITALS

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

USDEL SALT TWO II

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VIENNA FOR MBFR DEL

HELSINKI FOR MPT DEL

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PARM, NL

SUBJECT: MBFR: CALL BY NETHERLANDS MINISTER APRIL 11

1. SUMMARY. IN BRIEF CALL APRIL 11 ON PM DIRECTOR SPIERS, DUTCH MINISTER VAN AERSSSEN AND FIRST SEC DE JONGE ASKED FOR US VIEWS ON SOVIET APRIL 7 PROPOSALS ON HUNGARIAN ISSUE, ON CONGRESSIONAL SITUATION, ON ALLEGED SOVIET TANK REINFORCEMENTS IN EUROPE, AND ON SIGNIFICANCE OF REPORTED
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PACKARD STATEMENTS ON TACNUCS AT RECENT AMSTERDAM MEETING. SPIERS REPLIED THAT WE SAW OUTLINES OF SOVIET PROPOSALS AS MAXIMUM OBTAINABLE AND SUBSTANTIALLY ACCEPTABLE AND THAT WE BELIEVED IT IMPORTANT TO PRESS AHEAD TOWARD AGREEMENT ON DATE FOR FALL NEGOTIATIONS, ESPECIALLY IN VIEW OF RENEWED CONGRESSIONAL ATTENTION TO US OVERSEAS FORCES. HE NOTED WE DO NOT HAVE CLEAR READING ON TANK REINFORCEMENT REPORTS, AND WAS AWARE OF NO CHANGE IN OUR APPRECIATION OF ROLE OF TACNUCS. END SUMMARY.

2. NOTING THAT HE PERSONALLY THOUGHT MATTERS WERE REACHING THE POINT OF DECISION AND SUSPECTED AMBASSADOR QUARLES DID TOO, VAN AERSSSEN ASKED FOR US VIEWS ON SOVIET APRIL 7 PROPOSALS (REPORT ON WHICH HAD JUST BEEN RECEIVED IN EMBASSY). SPIERS REPLIED THAT ALTHOUGH PROPOSALS WERE NOT IN EVERY RESPECT WHAT WE WOULD HAVE HOPED FOR AT EARLIER STAGE, AND ALTHOUGH IT WOULD BE MOST DESIRABLE TO OBTAIN SOVIET AGREEMENT TO COUNTER-STATEMENT ON HUNGARY WHICH DID NOT MENTION ITALY, WE BELIEVED PROPOSALS WERE ABOUT THE BEST WE WERE LIKELY TO GET AND WERE SUBSTANTIALLY ACCEPTABLE. WE ALSO FELT IT WAS IMPORTANT IN VIEW OF CONGRESSIONAL SITUATION TO MOVE AHEAD TO OBTAIN DATE FOR FALL NEGOTIATIONS.

3. VAN AERSSSEN ASKED FOR ELABORATION ON CONGRESSIONAL SITUATION, "TO ASSIST HIM IN REPORTING." REFERRING TO THE MARCH DEMOCRATIC CONFERENCE RESOLUTION, SPIERS DESCRIBED THE SITUATION AS GIVING CAUSE FOR CONCERN. ONCE MBFR NEGOTIATIONS BEGAN, WE ENVISAGED A PROCESS OF EXPLORATION ON VARIOUS ELEMENTS OF AN INTEGRATED PACKAGE, INCLUDING CONSTRAINTS AS WELL AS REDUCTIONS, WITH EMPHASIS ON THE SECURITY ASPECTS OF MBFR. ENGAGEMENT OF SUCH A PROCESS, WE HOPED, WOULD DIMINISH CONGRESSIONAL SUPPORT FOR UNILATERAL REDUCTIONS BELOW THE POINT WHERE THE SENATE WOULD GO ON RECORD AS FAVORING THEM. BUT IT WAS CRITICAL, IN OUR VIEW, TO BEGIN THE PROCESS. IN RESPONSE TO VAN AERSSSEN'S QUESTION AS TO WHETHER THERE WOULD BE MORE EMPHASIS ON FORCE IMPROVEMENTS IN OUR CONGRESSIONAL EFFORT, SPIERS REPLIED THAT MANY ARGUMENTS WERE USEFUL, DEPENDING ON THE INTERLOCUTOR, AND THAT THIS WAS ONE OF THEM. HOWEVER, THE MOST PERSUASIVE AND CONVINCING ARGUMENT WAS STILL THE POINTLESSNESS OF UNILATERAL REDUCTIONS WHILE
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THERE WAS SOME PROSPECT, THROUGH MBFR, OF OBTAINING SOVIET

WITHDRAWALS IN RETURN.

4. WHAT IS NEEDED, SPIERS EMPHASIZED, IS TO BEGIN THE PROCESS AND TO FORMULATE A PLAUSIBLE OPENING POSITION. OUR EARLY INTEREST IN RAPID RESOLUTION OF THE HUNGARIAN ISSUE WAS MOTIVATED FIRST BY OUR CONVICTION THAT THE SOVIET POSITION ON THIS ISSUE HAD A SUBSTANTIVE BASIS, BUT MOST OF ALL BY OUR CONCERN LEST MBFR MOMENTUM FALTER OVER AN APPARENTLY PROCEDURAL ISSUE IN A MANNER WHICH WOULD EXPOSE THE WHOLE PROJECT TO CONGRESSIONAL RIDICULE. AT THIS POINT, NONETHELESS, WE FELT THAT PROGRESS HAD BEEN ACHIEVED ON THE HUNGARIAN ISSUE AND THAT NATO MIGHT WELL HAVE EMERGED STRENGTHENED, SINCE WE HAVE SUCCESSFULLY DEVELOPED CONSULTATIVE MECHANISMS WHICH WILL STAND US IN GOOD STEAD IN THE NEGOTIATIONS THEMSELVES. BUT IT IS IMPORTANT TO PRESS AHEAD.

5. VAN AERSSEN ASKED FOR VIEWS ON REPORTS OF MAJOR SOVIET TANK REINFORCEMENTS IN THE CENTER REGION. DEPT OFFICERS RESPONDED THAT THERE WAS NO AGREED EVALUATION YET OF THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THESE REPORTS OR OF THE FACTS INVOLVED.

6. VAN AERSSEN ALLUDED IN CONCLUSION TO A RUMOR CIRCULATING IN THE HAGUE TO EFFECT THAT ALLEGED DAVID PACKARD DEPREICATION OF ROLE OF TACNUCS IN SITUATION OF STRATEGY PARITY AT RECENT AMSTERDAM CONFERENCE WAS US TRIAL BALLOON. SPIERS NOTED THAT THIS WAS OLD DEBATE AND ASSURED MINISTER HE KNEW OF NO NEW DEVELOPMENT WHICH WOULD HAVE CHANGED US APPRECIATION OF VALUE OF THESE WEAPONS. ROGERS

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